

AIR, DIRT & INK !!!

A Boring Communications Publication

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August-December 1987

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS:

"UPSHAW'S LATEST UNION FAILURE"

JUDGE REFUSES TO HEAR LAWSUIT AGAINST FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OBSERVANCE OF THANKSGIVING & XMAS

Federal Circuit Judge Alfred E. Nieminsky refused to hear the civil lawsuit brought before him by New York ACLU attorney Jud Helm against the Federal Government yesterday. Helm had sought to sue the government claiming that federally recognized holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas were an infringement of his first amendment rights.

Helm said that there are two reasons that he finds the holidays offensive. "Number one, the holidays claim that there's something to thankful about and number two, that there is someone to be thankful to for number one," he said. It is a violation of the separation of church and state, according to Helm. (continued on page 3)

STOCKMARKET CRASHES!!

"BOOM!!!" [ADI]

Gene Upshaw, former head of the NFL Players' Association (NPA), is despondent over the failure of his latest union endeavor.

Upshaw, a former defensive lineman, refused to take time off after unsuccessfully attempting to renegotiating a contract for the NPA. Telling his advisors that being a chief contract negotiator was in his blood Upshaw left his post with the NPA in mid-October and went to Fillmore, CA to organize a union for a group of militant Thom Turkeys.

Armed with the slogan: "We are no ones Uncle Thom," the short-lived union fought for a "higher cut of the festivities' profits" and other traditional union issues. "Come on. Where would they be without us?" one turkey asked reporters.

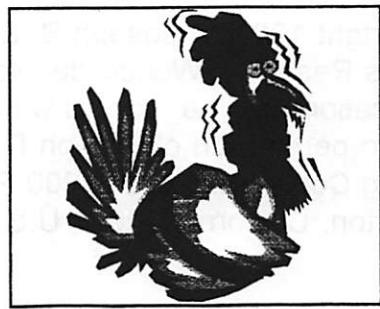
On Nov 27 the union was forced to disband. Six million union members failed to show up at the Friday morning balloting meeting that had been called by President Upshaw. The meeting had been called in order to ratify the contract

that Upshaw had negotiated for them.

"I don't understand it," the shaken Upshaw told reporters. "On Wednesday the Owners were so eager to negotiate and give us everything we wanted. They were laughing and slapping each other on the back, like they were having a good ol' time. And then this," Upshaw threw the contract papers onto the podium and looked out at the empty auditorium.

"Six million members, gone. Just like that," Upshaw said. "I don't understand it."

At last report the beleaguered Upshaw has been said to be resting comfortably in Los Angeles watching old Mickey Rooney-Judy Garland films non-stop. [ADI]



picture of missing union member 1

AIR, DIRT & INK "Airing opinions, kicking up
Dirt and wasting a lot of Ink!!"

A Boring Communications publication (a division of Last Minute Productions).

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Publisher/Editor: Joseph Bustillos

Financial Editor: Gibran X

National/International correspondent:

..... Vacant

Fitness correspondent: Will Peabody

Entertainment correspondent: Vacant

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"AIRLINES TO TAKE OVER US POSTAL SERVICE"

US Postal Services Chief, Preston Robert Tisch announced today in Washington that the government plans to turn the Post Office over to private industry. In a effort to improve efficiency and on-time delivery he said that the airlines are being considered for the job of handling the nation's mail.

(continued on page 11)

"THE PUBLISHER'S CORNER"

"For a measly six bucks you can become thoroughly informed about what's not happening in the news. How can you beat that?"

So went the last ADI promo. By the "record breaking" number of responses we got from that promo it's evident that there must be an abundance of great six buck deals running around the country these days. Oh well.

Unfortunately, due to our limited resources (which are now that much more limited because of some "great" investment tips from our resident financial expert, Gibran) this will be the last issue of ADI that we will be mailing to non-subscribers free of charge (we'll still send a free issue to any no-good buddy that you turn in to us).

So if you've been putting off sending in that check for six bucks, now's the time (the PTL will get by for a month without your check, but we can't). Don't delay.

All of us at Boring Communications would like to wish you and your's a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year (really, no joke!).

NEXT ISSUE: "The Valentine's Day" Issue featuring more "Sex and the Single Brain Cell" and "The Adventures of Millisa!!" [ADI]

"BORK GETS THE BIRD!"

The Association of California Kiwi Growers (ACK!) awarded defeated Reagan Supreme Court Nominee, Robert Bork the 1987 Rose Bird Media Award. ACK spokesman, Peter Piper, said that the Award is designed to recognize judicial personalities who put up a valiant but hopeless effort to beat back a bad public image campaign. For his part, Judge Bork honored ACK's award by not attending the award ceremony that was held Sunday morning at Multipurpose Room B of the Elderidge Cleaver Elementary school in Berkeley, CA.

Various members of the assembled Press (which consisted primarily of 5th grade student's from Mrs. Pritchard's Creative Writing Class) asked Piper how the growers became involved with the award. After a measured pause in which to carefully chose his words, Piper explained that the previous ACK president had lost the associations advertising budget for the year by investing in a failing publishing firm in Southern California.

Pipers said that in the resulting litigation the publishing firm was required to come up with a suitable advertising campaign for the growers.

"After working on the thing for six months this was the best they could come up with," the openly disappointed Piper said. "It was obvious that we couldn't afford the expensive animated 'I heard it through the grapevine'-type commercials that the California Grape Growers were using to promote their product, but the Rose Bird Media Award?"

Ten year-old, Tommy Prothrow asked Piper who was the association's second choice for the Rose Bird Award. Piper snarled at the frightened youngster and said, "I personally feel that no one deserves the BIRD more than Meese!" [ADI]

LAWSUIT cont. from page one

Attorneys for the government were planning to prove that there is no religious or moral significance whatsoever in the government's observance of these holidays, according to sources close to the case.

Sources also said that the government was planning to prove it's case using testimony from the National Football League Commissioner, Pete Rozell, and several prominent players from (continued on page 11)

XEROX DISCOVERS HOW HUMANS THINK

At a Tuesday morning press conference Computer Research scientists from Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center (PARC) announced that they had made a significant step toward understanding how the human brain works.

Before the recent breakthrough scientists tried to duplicate the human thought processes using computers or Artificial Intelligence (AI). But scientists were perplexed by the test result they received when they gave a series of questions to computers that had an average human's level of "intelligence." The computers never came up with the same answers as those given by the humans.

"We were obviously missing some hidden factor in the algorithm that we were using," Chief research scientist, Sarah Bellum said.

"We discovered the missing factor when we realized that the reason the computers' answers didn't match the humans' answers was because the humans were wrong 99.9 percent of the time," said Bellum.

Bellum and staff immediately began implementing their new (continued on page 12)

"ELVIS ESTATE SETTLES SUIT WITH CEREAL FIRM"

The Presley Estate marked the 10 year anniversary of the singer's death by settling its law suit with the Post Cereal Company.

The suit claimed that the cereal company was negligent in not putting notices on its products warning consumers that the product might prove to be hazardous to blimped-out aging rock-and-roll singers who are high on drugs and prone to falling asleep with their faces in cereal bowls.

Attorney for Post, Larry Stodem, said, "We had evidence that suggests that the singer's face couldn't even fit in a cereal bowl. Therefore we had no part in the apparent drowning of the singer at his Memphis breakfast table. We just thought that it was time to end the litigation. Continuing it would have been a disservice to the fans," said attorney for the Elvis Estate, Aaron Elvis-Holstein.

The estate won an undisclosed sum that sources close to the singer estimate to be in the millions. The cereal company, however, retains the right to run commercials featuring the singer's music and an announcer's voice saying, "Post Toasties, the cereal Elvis was dying to dive into . . ." [ADI]

FILM REVIEW: "CROSS MY HEART" (OR "YOUNG YUPPIES IN HEAT")

[ed. If this sounds suspiciously like a serious movie review, I have to confess . . . it is. I promise I won't do this too often (I mean, I have my reputation to think of)]

Dave (Martin Short) loses his job on the day that he supposed to go on the crucial third date with the woman of his dreams, Kathy (Annette O'Toole). Don't ask me why third dates are crucial, I'm just quoting the film. Anyway, once the film started rolling I realized that I had probably made a mistake in taking a date, which happened to be our third, to review this movie.

Credit should be given to writers, Armyan Bernstein and Gail Parent for raising the anxiety level of the dating population in attendance with a worst case scenario that manages to remain believable (of course it didn't help matters any to have my date, who had pulled an all-nighter the night before, fall asleep midway through the movie).

Brushing aside the nagging sense of deja-vu, this film succumbed to two fatal flaws. The first stems from a current trend in movies to have the picture's storyline narrated to us with voice-overs that run during the opening credits.

In this case, Dave tells his best friend, Bruce, about the sad state of his unemployment and how wonderful a girl Kathy is while he models underwear for us. Kathy, in the meantime, is telling her girlfriend how special Dave is and how he makes her laugh and debates on whether she should tell Dave that she has a seven-year-old daughter. While she weighs these life and death issues the audience is treated to a scene of her soaking in her bathtub and shaving her legs.

Granted there isn't anything inherently wrong with this technique except that for the rest of the film Dave acts like a complete jerk and the only thing that appears to be special about Kathy is her anatomy. The movie makers are in such a hurry to cut to the chase scene (which take place mostly in the bedroom) that I'm never really convinced that Dave might actually be a nice guy or that Kathy might really be sweet. Give me a few scenes to show how sweet and caring these people are. Don't just tell me about it and then show me the exact opposite.

The second flaw was that the film was completely predictable. Maybe it's just American audiences, but it might help the sense of (continued on page 7)

SPECIAL FEATURE:

"WAKE UP VIRGINIA AND SMELL THE DAMN COFFEE!"

by Pauline Cendejas

[ed. Guest writer, Pauline Cendejas, does her part to spread a little Christmas cheer. Not bad writin' for a phone company employee (just kidding, Paul) **WARNING:** This essay contains information that, if it falls into the wrong hands, may be too shocking and prove to be detrimental to the development of normal childhood confusions about the Christmas season. As such, Matthew Bustillos is restricted from reading this essay.]

No, Virginia, there isn't a Santa Claus! And it's high time someone told you! Damn it woman, you're 84 years old!

No more jokes. Santa Claus is just an imaginary fat man in a red suit handed down in folklore. But don't get me wrong, there was a time when he served a purpose.

He was the epitome of the spirit of Christmas. Unfortunately, good old Saint Nick has been sold out. He is no longer the symbol of generosity and love. Now he is big business. You know, dollars and cents.

He's a source of bribery. Somewhere along the line an egotistical parent began giving presents from Santa and (because they didn't want Santa to get all the credit) from mom and dad. Well, that set a precedent! Now parents use him as the

proverbial carrot that they wave in front of their little brats to bribe them into behaving. Husbands use him as an oversized pacifier to nagging housewives. Kids just plain "use" him, writing unending lists of "I wants." And moms and dads all over the world have to buy twice the number of presents or appear cheap in their ungrateful kids' eyes.

The story goes, as you well know, that on Christmas eve a rather rotund bespeckled man in gaudy red suit ambles his way down your chimney and fills good little boys' and girls' stockings with presents. Now Virginia, even in your day this story must've been hard to swallow. But now it's the 80's and kids are just a little too sharp for this bullshit. I mean really! Flying reindeer?! Wake up and smell the damn coffee, woman.

Aw, c'mon, don't cry (it makes your dentures click together). Listen, I'm not saying to give up Christmas. Let's just be a little more realistic. I say, um . . . let's bring back the "saint" of Saint Nick. No?

Listen, this isn't another typical "Christmas is too commercialized" editorial. I mean, I enjoy the gift-giving and card-sending as much as the next guy (although probably not as much as Mattel or Hallmark). Let's just try to keep things in perspective.

Let's remember why we're celebrating. Oh, you can still enjoy the make-believe. It's fun. But don't lose focus on the reality. Keep in mind how Christmas really came to be. Even an imaginary Santa Claus would want it that way. **[ADI]**

"PAINTING ONESELF INTO THE APOLOGIST'S CORNER"

by Joe Hinajosa

[ed. It's time to put on your thinking caps boys and girls 'cause Professor Hinajosa is here to set you straight on what true believers believe. If the humor of this essay escapes you, it might be because you're one of the poor clowns that actually believes in this stuff ("It's gotta be true--Pastor said so"). Or perhaps this subject doesn't interest you. That's fine with me, the last thing Christianity needs are more pseudo-intellectuals. "Yesterday I coul'n't spell 'intellectual' but now I are one!"]

Author John Gribbin, in his In Search of the Big Bang¹ states, "the distinction between [science and philosophy] has become blurred and is far less real than most scientists or philosophers themselves acknowledge today." The basis for this "blurred" state of things is that twentieth century physics has lead to what Gribbin call "inexorably . . . the conclusion that at the fundamental level of subatomic particles such as electrons and protons, things really don't have any 'real' existence when they are not being monitored."² Gribbin mentions that "nobody has ever even seen an electron, say, or an atom."³ He quotes Ernst Mach as saying, "Atoms cannot be perceived by the senses; like all substances they are things of the thought . . . a mathematical model for facilitating the mental reproduction of the fact."⁴ As a theological speculator, these empirical axioms recalled to my mind an analogous theological statement: Θεος οὐδείς οπακεν ποντε ("No one has ever seen God," John 1:18). Perhaps it is possible that as the unobservable atom can have "being as such," the unobservable God (Θεος) can have "being" or οντος.

Gribbin cites Sir Arthur Eddington's famous illustration of the desk, "A desk, he pointed out, appears to our senses to be a solid object . . . your desk is mostly empty space and actually consists of a collection of tiny atoms, separated from one another by relatively huge empty spaces."⁵

¹John Gribbon, In Search of the Big Bang. Bantam Books, 1987, p. xiii.

²ibid., p. xv. [ed. note: ibid is a Latin abbreviation used by scholarly writers in their footnotes to refer back to the previous book quoted. The abbreviation is said to come from a phrase coined by the ancient scholar, Porkus Piggus, when he said, "Ibid, ibid, ibid, that's all folks."]

³ibid., p. xv.

⁴ibid., p. xv. [ed. note: Obviously Professor Hinajosa likes Porkus Piggus a lot].

⁵op cit., pp. xv, xvi. [ed. note: While op cit may look like another Latin abbreviation it is actually an abbreviation from a colloquial phrase that means, "the book quoted before the last book." The origin of the colloquialism is unknown but today in many inner city schools young students can be heard using what is considered by most linguistic scholars as a derivative phrase. When a typical student, for example, is asked why he didn't pass

CROSS continued from page 4

suspense if the filmmakers had made a better attempt at making me believe that the romance between Dave and Kathy might not work out. Why is it that only English filmmakers risk endings like the one in the film, "Educating Rita." But not a chance. Dave's too special and Kathy's too sweet.

Actually this film would have made a very nice two song video but as a full length film one is encouraged to follow my date's example and take a nap. [ADI]

APOLOGIST'S CORNER continued from page 6

Perhaps this view of physics is concordant with Paul's statement that "in Christ . . . all things are held together": *τα ταῦτα εν αὐτῷ συνεστεκεν* (Col. 1:17). Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon defines *συνιστεμι* as to "put together, organize, compose."⁶ Another definition almost anticipates modern physics, "to make firm or solid."⁷ Perhaps it is Christ who "makes firm or solid" "all reality," including Sir Arthur's proverbial desk.

Gribbin observes that in the 1920's, the new field of "Quantum Physics" discovered that "particles and waves are two aspects of the same thing. Light, which was thought of as an electromagnetic wave, had now to be thought of also as a stream of particles."⁸ If it is possible for light energy to possess both the characteristics of a wave and a particle, simultaneously, why would it be impossible for Jesus to possess both the characteristics of "God" and "Man" at the Incarnation? (John 1:1,14) Of course one could retort that "Photons have nothing to do with the Incarnation!" Still, it must be admitted that the nature of Light is a paradox and a seeming "antinomy" to the human understanding. And so is the Incarnation. (1 Tim. 3:16)

If reality is derived from and held together by God, this infers that everything we see and experience is a "refraction" of God. He, then, is the binding force of the universe and life. The ultimate expansion of the universe will lead to God and the ultimate destiny of our life will lead to God.⁹ [ADI]

the basketball to his brother he might respond, "'cos, Tyrone's 'on tha op'sit team!"'].

⁶Liddell and Scott. A Lexicon (Abridged). 1982. p. 678.

⁷ibid.

⁸Gribbin, p. xvi.

⁹[ed. note: Then again, we might all be nothing more than the cheap prize in some celestial cereal box waiting for one of God's kids to find us and say, "Ah dad . . . look what I found, another one of those cheap universes. When am I going to find the real prize?"]

THE EDITOR'S WILD HAIR: THE MERGER UNIVERSITY HYPERBOLE

by Joe Bustillos

THE Los Angeles Times front page headline read: "Fundamentalists Seeking to Control Baptist School, University Fights 'Debauchery' Charge." It was probably the first time in months that the press had covered a story on American Protestantism that didn't involved Jim and Tammy Bakker. As a result most of you probably missed it. I kind of wish I that had.

It seems that Baptist affiliated Mercer University (enrollment 6,000) had been ranked as being the ninth best "party school" in the September "Back to School" issue of Playboy magazine (anyone that's played in a summer volleyball league can attest to how competitive Baptists can be---probably got all pissed off 'cause they didn't rank in one of the top five spots). Anyway, according to the Times, this was the latest in a string of episodes (which included a condom ad in the school newspaper and a school sponsored showing of the R-rated film, "Beverly Hills Cop") that brought the university into conflict with the denomination's fundamentalist controlled state board.

What was at stake here, according to the fundamentalists was the school's standing as a Christian institution. But according to the school president, R. Kirby Godsey, what was at stake was the school's academic integrity and freedom.

Pretty boring stuff to the average reader (but then, no one would ever accuse a reader of ADI of being an "average reader"). As such, this business of "academic integrity" and Christian affiliation was part of a controversy that I encountered when I was a student at another conservative Christian university, Biola University (La Mirada, CA).

As a biblical studies major at Biola (1979-81) there were no Playboy rankings or pictorials. We had to make due with a cerebral/esoteric conflict centered on the question of "Biblical Inerrancy" (talk about wild times at good ol' BU).

The person that believes in "Biblical Inerrancy" (the Inerrantist . . . not to be confused with Jesuits who wrestle demon-possessed little

girls) explicitly holds that there are no errors in the Bible in anything that it states as fact, whether history or geography or any other subject that it may speak about. To the hordes of humanity that approach any biblical question with the phrase, "well, everyone has their own interpretation of the Bible," strict Inerrancy implies that there is one true interpretation for any given verse.

To the person that doesn't give a rip about the Bible this Inerrancy business no doubt ranks among the all-time bores of the universe. But to the poor slobs that major in biblical studies or are professors in biblical studies departments or teachers in Inerrantist organizations, towing the party line can be life and death stuff.

One thing that the non-religious may not understand is that when one becomes a Christian or submits oneself to the academic study of the Bible they don't take your brains away (granted, the organ is temporarily sedated, but if the thing ever worked before conversion it should "wake up" (continued on page 13)

SPECIAL FEATURE:

"SEX AND THE SINGLE BRAIN CELL: Disneyland Revisited"

by Joe Bustillos

[ed. Is it true or fiction? . . . Well, you saw this whole speel before, but then, some of you weren't really paying attention. "Warning? What Warning?" So here it is again: BEWARE: Due to the author's vagrant disregard for other's sensitivity toward "salty language," prolonged exposure to this article by small children, TV evangelists and field mice has been known to cause the kind of anarchy and chaos that only Charlton Heston has been known to overcome.]¹⁰

7:02 p.m.

The night is black and clear and the blinking red lights from the oil refinery towers on the distant hills are uncharacteristically visible. The faint light of a small plane silently glides across the starless blackness. Saturday night, a steady stream of cars cruise up and down Palm Drive behind my apartment. I debate with myself about whether I should open my bottle of White Zinfandel or wait until my prospective date for the night tells me that she already has plans.

8:08 p.m.

A lifetime can pass in the moments it takes me to deliberate regarding such things as the fate of my bottle of wine in the refrigerator. What's-her-face was in the shower when I called so I shall let the fate of the corked-one remain unchanged until I call her back. Her mother said to give her another twenty minutes---my jaded sense of what this night holds for me says that that should be just enough time for her to shower and get out the door before I call back.

Okay, in the last "Sex and the Single Brain Cell" some of you might have thought that I was being a little over sensitive about the trials and tribulations of getting a date and/or asking a girl to dance. I mean, seriously, how hard can the man be working if it takes him four and a half hours to hear three different women say, "No thank you, not right now"? (Then again you may not appreciate the mental dilemma that one undergoes to walk across a room in front of God and everyone only to walk back in front of God and (continued on page 10)

¹⁰If you choose to ignore this warning ADI, Boring Communications (a division of Last Minute Prod.) and Joe Bustillos refuse to be held responsible for any damage to personal or public property, loss of career or social status, lost sense of direction, loss ambitions, loss of inhibitions, lost use of polysyllabic words, loss of consciousness, lost sense of time, lost weekends, lost weekdays, lost weeknights, and a few things that may be "gained" as a result of your actions. You must be 18-years-old or over (but not too far over) to play. Void where prohibited. If rash develops discontinue use. Member FSLIC.

SEX continued from page 9

everyone when she delivers her now epic line, "No [sigh] not right now").

Anyway, last summer I went to Baxter's once with my sister (what does that tell you? Joyce is fun and all but there's a certain stigma attached to going out with one's sister. Not that she was the one needing a date, i.e., Mom: "Will someone please get Joe out of the house . . . Joyce, you're nominated." Joyce: "Ah mom, do I have to? Every time I take him out, he slobbers all over everyone and won't stay on his leash . . . "). Anyway, she was quite forward in criticizing my style of asking women to dance, like I was the one being too selective. Come on, how selective can one be when there's only three available women and 150 slobbering cephalopods (not counting yours truly, of course)? I just didn't want to get trampled on in the bottleneck that was forming in front of the table of the three women.

So she told me to loosen up. Jesus, I was just asking them to dance, not to marry me, or even to stick around long enough to learn my name. Anyway, in the intervening month (from the time **"Sex and the Single Brain Cell: I Survived the EET"** was written to today) I've gone out twice and as unbelievable as it may seem, I actually got a chance to do some dancing. If the truth were revealed, however, one would find out that the first time I was with a group of friends so the dances were just about built in (but don't think that the dances weren't appreciated, Jenny) and the second time I stumbled into a black hole and found somebody who didn't know it was uncool to say "Yes" when I asked her if she wanted to dance ("Yes? Wait a minute, maybe you don't understand the question"). My buddy, Ed said that I'd better keep it up 'cause I was on a roll. . .

[9:05 p.m. -The formality of contacting tonight's date and hearing that she's got plans for the evening, along with the fate of my now-uncorked friend has been attended

to---now I can get on with this exciting narrative in peace ---Oh, but she is going to call me tomorrow about catching a matinee together . . I can hardly wait . .]

So this birthday party came up and I didn't really know all the details but I figured if there wasn't dancing there I'd probably be able to connect with my friends and go dancing someplace else. Cool. Then a couple of days before the party I ran into my 'Disneyland' friend [see **"Sex and the Single Brain Cell: I Survived the EET"**, ed.] and she asked me what I was doing for the weekend. I mentioned the party and she said that she might be interested in going (did you catch that? "Might." Now which one was "might," "as a last resort" or "please leave"?). I must have stumbled into another black hole 'cause with only a minimum of negotiating she actually agreed to go with me to the party.

On the evening of the party I was late leaving my apartment (what else is new, anyone who's known me longer than fifteen minutes---the average length of time that I'm late---is quite familiar with this particular scenario). When I pulled up to her place she met me in the driveway and before I'd even had a chance to say, "hi, you look great" or why I was late, she said, "So . . . why are you late?" I felt like saying, "cause I'm Joe Bustillos." Jesus, don't they teach people anything in school? Writers don't know what time it is. I left as soon as I'd beaten whatever it was that I was writing into the ground (a previous flame once warned me that I'd better find someone who's willing to play second fiddle to my computer). Besides, my typical 15 minutes is well within the realm of being fashionably late for a party.

So . . . after the first few jittery moments I relaxed enough to make small talk about whether there'd be food at the party, and about how good she looked in her white mini-dress and about the guy that the party was for, it

(continued on page 11)

LAWSUIT from p. 3

the NFL.

In Nieminsky's statement he said, "If Mr. Helm wants to be 1987's Scrooge that's his personal business. But that's certainly no reason to tie up valuable court time. Simply because he has a bad attitude about Thanksgiving and Christmas, probably stemming from a 'deprived childhood,' is no license to infringe upon the happiness and beliefs of others." [ADI]

US MAIL continued from page 2

Insiders speculate that Atlanta's Delta Air Lines will be the nation's next mail carrier. Delta's vice chairman and chief financial officer, Robert Oppenlander told reporters that the airline's recent run-ins with the FAA has proven the company's ability to deal with government bureaucracy and come out shining.

Also heavily favored for the new service is Air Florida, TWA, and PSA.

The change is to take place on April 1, 1989. [ADI]

SEX cont. from page 10

being his 30th birthday and all. Blah, blah, blah. She then asked, "Um . . . so, how old are you?"

I laughed, "Oh, I'm 29."

Silence. There was still enough tension in the air about me being late, I didn't want to plunge this date into an immediate tailspin by bringing new areas of incompatibility into the conversation. Besides, I was always told that it was rude to ask a woman her age. So I did the next stupidest thing and asked her how old she thought I was (an innocent enough question).

She said, "Oh, 24 or 25." That was within the ball park, but then I was dying to find out how old she was. I thought, you know, early 20's. I mean, this is the 80's. A woman's age isn't really that important. It's not like she was too old for me or anything . .

After a dozen failed attempts at maintaining a conversation that involved more than a question followed by a one-word response (you know those kinds of conversations:

Q: "So, do you know these people very well?"
A: "No."
Q: "What kind of music do you like listening to?"

A: "All kinds."), my curiosity got the better of me and I asked her how old she was.

She said, rather nonchalantly, "Oh, 19."

Right. 19. I took a firm grip on my steering wheel while my mind swam with thoughts containing the words "almost-jailbait," "young thing," "lucky guy," and "trouble" (in no particular order). I have levi's that are older than she is! I smiled at her. 19. Right. There should be a law against sexy 19 year-olds wearing white mini-dresses.

When we got to the party it was seven-thirty. People were spread over two patios and a family room of this elegant Newport Beach home, talking, drinking beer and not dancing. No problem, Ed and gang wanted to go to the White House in Laguna Beach later and do some movin' to Motown sounds.

'Disneyland' said "no" and at eight-thirty announced that she was ready to go home. Eight-thirty. I guess her mom wanted her home early, but eight-thirty? I thought, Okay, she might want to go someplace else and sit and talk (did I mention how low I scored on the SAT?). No, she just wanted to go home. I wondered if this had anything (continued on page 12)

XEROX from page 3

discovery, Artificial Stupidity (AS), on a computer system specifically designed for the purpose, the Artificial Stupidity System (A-). The A-- uses a special hand-held input device, the Meese, that is based on technology used in current Apple and IBM computers to make selections from on-screen menus. But the Meese, according to Bellum, is more than a simple pointing device.

One of the two special functions of the Meese is to take the selected input and draw the wrong conclusions.

"Say, for example, we give the A-- data regarding all of the sexually explicit material published in the US during the past decade. The Meese is likely to draw a direct 'cause and effect' relationship between the sexually explicit material and the increase in violence in the US. It's really quite life-like in its use of syllogisms," Bellum said.

The second special function of the Meese is to withhold essential information from the computer's brains, its Central Processing Unit (CPU).

"We have just begun to run experiments with this last function," Bellum said. "But it seems that the device, because it happens to be between the data and the CPU, as any input device would be, makes the fallacious assumption that it has the intelligence to decide what information should get to the CPU and what information shouldn't," Bellum said.

"This feature might be too life-like for our purposes," Bellum concluded. [ADI]

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to do with the phone call she made a half an hour before she told me she wanted to leave?
Hum-m-m. Oh, Probably not.

It was kind of quiet on the way back to her place. I took the scenic route. I figured if my night was going to end this quickly I might as well enjoy the drive back to Anaheim Hills (besides, with any luck I was going to make her late for her second date).

She asked me if I was upset 'cause she wanted to leave so early. Not really, I thought to myself. Somewhere deep in my irrational mind I figured that she still wanted to spend time with me (perhaps not tonight or tomorrow night or next week or . . .). As I parking the car in front of her place she told me that there was no need for me to walk her to the door and was out of the car the second it came to a complete stop (obviously she was under the impression that I was going to tear her lips off with an ill-advised but hotly passionate kiss . . . then again, maybe she was in a hurry to get into something sexy for her second date. I wish I hadn't thought that). She stepped away from the car and said, "um, call me tomorrow."

Right. I had to chuckle because there was an unreal quality to the way the evening collapsed. Sure I'll call you tomorrow, sweetheart. I'll need someone to explain to me why I'm driving home from a date at nine-thirty.

So, like the proverbial dog returning to his vomit, I managed to find my way to a local Baxter's. I sucked down two Long Island Ice teas, found two women to say, "No thank you, not right now," and got home in time to watch Star Trek.

You know, I'm really getting to hate Mickey Mouse. [ADI]

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after about five or six years). Thus, intellectual differences arise and because this whole thing is tied to a "belief system" it becomes a moral question. And in my time at Biola one professor was fired and a department chairman quit over this stupid issue.

I was a left-leaning moderate which means that I accepted about 55 percent of the Inerrancy decorum but spent a majority of my time looking for alternatives that were nonetheless "Christian." (That was pretty vague. What I mean is, I believed in the principle behind the Inerrancy argument but I refused to tow the party line).

The mistake I made back then and the mistake that I think those involved in the Mercer University controversy are making today is assuming that this problem is a problem of "knowing" something to be true and therefore it is just a matter of proving that the other guy is wrong. "It involves the Bible, let's haggle it out intellectually using the Bible."

One author that I used to haggle with over this issue (via his books) was Francis Schaeffer. If the name Schaeffer conjures up for you images of late night TV and a short balding man with glasses at the keyboards, you are not altogether wrong. The Schaeffer that I am referring to was an odd little man who ran around the Swiss Alps sporting Judge Bork's beard and a dutchboy's knickers and ran a bible school for Evangelical Christians recovering from intellectualism. He was known among conservative Christians as something of an intellectual (by definition, he could be only "something of an intellectual" because being an "intellectual Christian" is considered heretical in some quarters and an oxymoron in others).

Anyway, in his last book, *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, he spent 192 pages arguing, testifying, explaining and otherwise "tellin' the folks at home . . ." that the cornerstone of true Christianity is the belief in a perfect, error-free Bible (Biblical Inerrancy). And I, for my part, argued to myself that talking about a perfect, error-free Bible was meaningless. It was meaningless because even if the Bible were perfect and error-free we, being human (less-than perfect or error-free) can read it, interpret it, and translate it in only an imperfect and prone to error manner (this doesn't even begin to address how one might "live it").

The years passed. Schaeffer died. Biola hired a more conservative president and chairman for the department of biblical studies. And I now lean so far to the left that I use the prefix "ex-" when describing what type of Christian I am. End of story, right? Not quite.

Calling myself an ex-Christian isn't the same as saying that I've lost my religious consciousness or that I'm now devoted to the Gospel according to Hugh Hefner (besides, he hasn't responded to any of my applications to become the mansion's in-residence telephone technician). While I was doing my research for this article, pulling up old articles and papers that I had written during the Biola years, it occurred to me that Schaeffer was probably right all along.

In a moment of "inspiration" I suddenly realized that it was not so much that he was arguing for the truth of Inerrancy as much as that abandoning it would bring about the end of the faith (as he understood it). For the symbolically oriented: it's not $X=Y$ and therefore X is true, but simply $X=Y$. I realize that this stuff is just a bit dense and those of you who have read thus far deserve some sort of medal of valor for hanging in there, but there really is a simple point behind all of this verbiage.

Whether Schaeffer realized it or not his was a sociological argument for believing in

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Inerrancy. If he had been a conservative Catholic he would have made the office of the Pope the line of demarcation. If he had been a conservative Mormon it would have been the Book of Mormon; A conservative American politician, the US Constitution; Even a "conservative" Marxist, the writings of Marx and Lenin. There was a term in the Biola catalogue and PR sheets that typified this idea: distinction. Biola representatives used to talk about the "Biola distinctives."

A distinctive is the stuff that gives a group its sense of self-identity. It answers the question: "what makes me X and not Y?" For the conservative Protestant it's Biblical Inerrancy, for the conservative Catholic it's the Papal office, for the conservative Mormon it's the Book of Mormon, etc. Within the larger group (Protestants, Catholics, Mormons, etc.) it is the self-appointed task of the conservatives to draw their respective movements back to these points of distinction. They are the keepers of the "oracles of Truth." No problem with that, except when said distinctions come into conflict with the objectives of the larger group.

In the case of Mercer University there is a conflict between the conservatives' understanding of what a Christian university should teach and the administrators' academic mindset. Anyone who has pursued a university education knows that an educationally honest professor will present a myriad of positions for any given subject, each with their own particular "appreciation" of the "truth" (then of course he'll deliver his pet-theory which one will need to memorize to pass the exam). And the closer one draws towards really "knowing" a subject the more the answers become less absolute and the questions more numerous. It is the nature of education to begin from the position of

apparent understanding (the oracles of truth) and end in tentative theories. This generally doesn't sit very well with the intolerant conservative constituency.

How Mercer University resolves its conflict is more a matter of politics and public relations savvy than the victory of "Truth over Falsehood." These things run in cycles. If the conservatives "win," the university will become a propaganda mill, "a Bible school," promoting the one understood truth. Then in another couple years, perhaps decades, someone will lecture on the other positions and ideas. Slowly the university will begin to move back toward being more concerned about academic excellence than objective truth. Of course if the current administration "wins" the school will eventually lose its distinctives and, like Harvard or Princeton before it, it will become unrecognizable from the University of Georgia or Georgia Tech (some time before that happens the conservatives will pullout completely and begin their own "school," beginning the cycle someplace else). In the end, Schaeffer was right. Without the given distinctives they all look the same.

But regardless of the results of Mercer University's problems there remains the underlying question of how the conservatives' "sacred" distinctives in providing a sense of self-identity for the group may also distract it from the group's more immediate message. In the case of conservative Protestant organizations (for which I am most familiar) I can't help but wonder if these distinctives don't completely overshadow the "ethereal" commandments left by the Master. According to John's Gospel, Jesus said, "All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another." (John 13:35) It would seem that these groups are more concerned with the distinctives ("what makes me X and not Y?") than this vague directive towards love. Schaeffer may have been right about his distinctives and the cessation of conservative Protestantism, but who the hell cares if it gets in the way of recognizable love. [ADI]